

GREATER BETHESDA CHURCH HISTORY

The Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church was organized by a group of brothers and sisters who assembled at the home of the Rev. & Mrs. R. B. Nicks. The Nicks Family resides at 3106 Kings Court, Ellicott City, Maryland. There, they read scriptures, sang hymns and prayed prayers. The brethren who were in attendance at the meeting were, Rev. R. B. Nicks, Shirley D. Nicks, Marcus C. Nicks, Byron Summerville, Patricia Summerville, Avis Williams, Carl H. Balark, Allie M. Balark, Wendy L. Friend, Mae McDonald, David L. Brown, Michele E. Brown, Deserie Reynolds, Gene Johnson, Yvonne Weldon, Jane Johnson and Wade Montgomery.

Sis. Denise Nicks was asked to take over as chairperson of the meeting in order to entertain a motion regarding Rev. Nicks Becoming the first pastor of the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church. Sis. Deserie Reynolds made a motion that Rev. R. B. Nicks become the first pastor of the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church. Bro. Bryon Summerville seconded the motion that Rev. Nicks become the first pastor of the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, and the motion carried. Rev. Nicks humble accepted the call as pastor and further stated that he was thankful to God for allowing him to serve.

After Pastor Nicks was called as pastor, the church was named the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church. The naming of the church was derived from the 5th Chapter of John where it is recorded that Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. There in Jerusalem near the sheep gate was a pool which is called in Hebrew tongue Bethesda, A great multitude of impotent people would lie in the pool when the water was troubled. There was one who had been in invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, He asked him, "do you want to get well?" the important man replied, Sir, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is troubled. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes ahead of me." Then Jesus said unto him, "Rise!" Take up they bed and walk." All at once the man was healed. Thus, the Church was named the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, symbolizing a "Place of Healing".

The place of worship for the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church at the time of organization was designated as the United Baptist Missionary Conver Hinton Hall, and 940 West Madison Avenue, Baltimore, MD. The first worship service was held on Sunday, October 7, 2001 at 3:30p.m

Pastor Nicks' first sermon was titled "You Can Walk" taken from the 5th Chapter of John. At the conclusion of the sermon, the invitation to discipleship was extended and the following persons became applicants for membership with the Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church: Shirley D. Nicks, Marcus C. Nicks, Allie M. Balark, Bernice M. Bowman, left without a pastor for a brief while. Deacon Byron Summerville, Chairperson of the Deacon Board helped the church pick Rev. Dr. Andre H. Humphrey as our second pastor. We worshipped under his leadership until he resigned as pastor in February 2011. Once again, we were left without a pastor. Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Andre Humphrey, Rev. Keith Bailey, and Evangelist Dr. Edna Vivian Smith were given their Baptist License on February 13, 2011. This Ministerial and Evangelistic Service was broadcasted on Cable TV. Rev. Bailey had several major events at our church broadcasted on his TV Channel 75 during his administration at our church. Rev. Keith Bailey agreed in March 2011 to serve as "Acting Pastor" until the Pulpit Search Committee found and elected the next pastor for our church. Under the leadership of Dr. Edna V. Smith, the process and search for a new pastor began. However, due to circumstances beyond the church control, the election of a new pastor was postponed. Our church membership fell to an all time low and the pulpit committee was dissolved. Our church oldest member and Mother of the church, Deaconess Dorothy FordBey, died in 2012 and the members decided it was time to search again for a new pastor. Deacon Byron Summerville and Deaconess Patricia Summerville along with their daughter Tiffany Summerville gave our church over 10 years of valuable service until they relocated to South Carolina to live. Rev. Keith Bailey served as faithful "Acting Pastor" from March 4, 2011 until December 29, 2013 and his work in the church remains greatly appreciated.

On December 29, 2013, the church members voted and elected Rev. Dr. Roger L. Holliman as their newly elected pastor. On May 17, 2017 our church held an installation for their third elective pastor Rev. Dr. Roger L. Holliman. Under his leadership we have refinanced our mortgage and paid off our past debts. Under the guidance of Rev. Keith Bailey, President of "The John T. Polk Food Pantry Ministry" was born and continues to grow in its development, benefitting and blessing both the Church and the Community. We also honored our senior member, some of which have gone on to be with the Lord.

Rev. Dr. Roger L. Holliman left our church on July 2015. Again, Rev. Keith Bailey agreed to serve as our "Acting Pastor" which we all were thankful. In June 2017, Rev. Tony Lawson II, was picked to serve as our interim Pastor which he did until the end of April 2018. Under his leadership, he developed a website and created activities for the youth. In the span from January to April 2018, we held services at the "Mission Possible" Center located in the 1900 block of North Ave. under the leadings of Rev. Lawson until he resigned in April 2018. Unfortunately, our church suffered water pipe breakage and our church building was closed for services from January – July 2018.

At that time our faithful Rev. Keith Bailey took over until Rev. Alan Postell of Greater Destiny Christian Ministries came to our help and introduced us to Rev. James Woods. The remaining remnant of our church asked Rev. James Woods to be our Interim Pastor. Later, we voted to make Rev. Woods our Pastor-Elect. On December 1, 2018, Rev. Woods will be installed as Pastor. So far under his leadership, our church has become revitalized and is growing in every way. We all look forward to GOD using him to be a greater blessing not only to our church but our surrounding community. He helped save our church from closing with the remaining members (Sis. Allie Marie Balark, Sis. Yvonne Weldon, Dr. Edna Vivian Smith, and Rev. Keith Bailey). He brought us people who became the Friends of Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church and have proven to be a God send blessing for us all. They followed God's word "Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers," Galatians 6:10. Collectively we all saw God's miracle of keeping our church here to serve our community.